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## Reagan Nears Decision on Cabinet Posts

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President-elect Reagan is believed to be close to making final decisions on four key Cabinet positions by naming Sen. John Tower secretary of defense, William E. Simon Treasury secretary, John French Smith attorney general and William Casey director of the CIA.

Sources in the Reagan transition team also said retired Gen. Alexander Haig is fading as a possible choice for secretary of state and that George P. Shultz is now considered to be the front-runner there.

In addition, Reagan sources said Rep. David A. Stockman, R-Mich., is rising rapidly as a candidate for energy secretary and that Caspar Weinberger probably can have the important post of director of the Office of Management and Budget, if he wants it.

Tower is the conservative Republican from Texas who is slated to take over the Senate Armed Services Committee in the new Congress. Simon served as Treasury secretary under President Nixon. Smith is Reagan's personal counsel, and Casey was his campaign director.

Reagan has received the recommendations of the Transition Appointments Committee, headed by Smith. Although he will have little time to study the choices of two or three names for each Cabinet position during his brief Washington visit, Reagan is expected to make the final decisions when he returns to California on Friday. Official announcements are not expected until after Thanksgiving, but people in key positions at transition headquarters here believe some of the nominations have been settled for some time.

"Remember, nothing is final until the governor makes his choice," warned one transition official.

But several officials close to the decision-making process believe the Treasury, defense, justice and CIA posts are fixed in concrete.

Simon and Smith are consensus candidates because Reagan intimates do not believe anyone else was seriously considered for Treasury and justice. In both cases, there are other names on the lists given to Reagan but no one can be found who believes anyone else has a chance. Simon, who served on Reagan's Economic Coordinating Committee,

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Smith is regarded as not ambitious for a Washington job, even the post of attorney general, but he is as trusted and close to Reagan as Charles Kirbo has been to President Carter and can be expected to accept any job the president-elect asks him to take.

There are mixed sentiments at transition headquarters about the decision that might take Tower out of the Senate, where he would be chairman of the Armed Services Committee and put him at the top of the Pentagon. Some Reaganites are enthusiastic about the purported strategy regarding Tower, a former Navy enlisted man with a long interest in defense and national security affairs.

Those who view Tower dimly as secretary of defense do so because they say Reagan has no need to cement his support for increasing the nation's defense capability with the Senate committee. Even Democratic Chairman John Stennis of Mississippi, who loses his job to the ranking Republican on Jan. 20, is on the same wavelength as Reagan when it comes to buttressing national defense. There are some who are expressing concern that aging Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., who is in line for the chairmanship, might be an occasional problem for the Reagan administration. But they say they also see a chance that the chairmanship might devolve upon Sen. John Warner, R-Va., an ex-Marine, a good friend of the president-elect and a former secretary of the navy.

The speculation is that the Tower deal was worked out last weekend at Pacific Palisades when Gov. William Clements of Texas visited Reagan there. Reportedly, the game plan would be for Tower to resign in order to accept the nomination to the Defense Department.

Thereupon, Clements would appoint former Gov. John B. Connally to Tower's seat in some certainty that the erstwhile presidential candidate would surely win a special election for a six-year term within the year against any Democrat.

The report that Tower was headed for the Pentagon came first from columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, along with the report that Connally was slated for Tower's seat. In Philadelphia at a conference of GOP governors, Clements said, "That's the nuttiest thing I've ever heard."

But a congressional source told the Associated Press he would vouch for the whole scenario.

Casey, who was an enthusiastic member of the Office of Strategic Services when it was the precursor of the CIA during World War II, has always been the front-runner to suc-

only other person

ation for the CIA post is said to be a former deputy attorney general and ambassador to Yugoslavia, Laurence Silberman. The CIA transition team is headed by Silberman, a man who is forthright to the point of abrasiveness. Some officials believe Silberman might be in line for the all-important post of deputy director of CIA under Casey.

There were some rumors yesterday that Sen. Henry Jackson, D-Wash., might be in the race for secretary of state, mainly because his one-time aide Richard Perle appeared suddenly to be on the transition teams for both defense and state. Later, officials explained that there were undisclosed reasons for moving Perle from the defense team to the state team and that there was no significance to the shift in terms of Jackson.

Shultz reportedly had been the subject of some controversy in the Reagan camp because he does not see eye-to-eye with Reagan's top echelon on Middle East policy. The Reagan insiders are said to be pressing for a tilt toward Israel while Shultz is considered to be closer to the Carter position of extending the hand of friendship almost equally to the Arabs and Israelis.

Former NATO commander Haig, who was White House chief of staff under Nixon in the last days before Nixon resigned, has made it clear that he is willing and eager but his star is not believed to be in the ascendancy.

There have been recurring reports that Rep. Stockman was slated for the OMB job in the White House, but Reagan sources said the 34-year-old Texas-born Stockman is being viewed as a natural for the Department of Energy. This is one of the departments Reagan said he intended to abolish as part of his campaign promise to cut down the cost of government and the weight of governmental controls.

But there are many functions of the Energy Department that would have to continue under another banner and Stockman has been extremely impressive to Reagan's inner circle.

Stockman is a Michigan State graduate who went on to Harvard Divinity School and the Harvard Institute of Politics before becoming an aide to Rep. John Anderson. He is a former executive director of the House Republican Conference and has served in the House since his election in 1976.

Weinberger, a veteran economist and businessman who is associated with Shultz in the Bechtel Corp., reportedly is not enthusiastic about the OMB post but can be expected to take on the job if Reagan asks him to do so.